

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEA-10 SIG-03 MMO-01 EUR-12 HA-05
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
USMISSION GENEVA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY VIENNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 217670

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: UNRWA, XF, PLO

SUBJECT: UNRWA MOVE TO VIENNA; ADCOM MEETING AUGUST 29

REF: A) AMMAN 6703; B) AMMAN 6705; C) STATE 288311;
D) VIENNA 7545; E) AMMAN 6837

1. IF ARAB STATES RAISE ISSUE OF UNRWA MOVE TO VIENNA AT
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AUGUST 29 MEETING, US REPRESENTATIVE TO ADCOM MAY EXPRESS
US VIEW THAT RELOCATION WITHIN AREA WOULD HAVE BEEN IDEAL
SOLUTION, ASSUMING THE AVAILABILITY OF ADEQUATE FACILITIES.
US REP, HOWEVER, SHOULD AVOID CRITICISM OF COM GEN FOR
FAILURE TO CONSULT ON THIS MATTER; HE DID IN FACT DISCUSS
MOVE WITH WORKING GROUP IN NEW YORK AND WITH DEPARTMENT
DURING HIS PRIVATE VISIT HERE IN MAY. HOST GOVERNMENTS,

PARTICULARLY JORDAN AND SYRIA, WERE NOTIFIED OF IMPENDING MOVE AND ASKED ABOUT AVAILABILITY OF ACCOMMODATIONS. IF ADCOM HAD WISHED TO CONSIDER MATTER BEFORE MOVE WAS MADE, IT COULD HAVE BEEN CONVENED BY THE MEMBERS IN BEIRUT. IN VIEW OF THE DETERIORATING SITUATION IN BEIRUT, AND DIRECT EFFECT ON HEADQUARTERS STAFF, WE BELIEVE MCELHINEY HAD AMPLE JUSTIFICATION FOR TAKING ACTION EXPEDITIOUSLY ON MOVE. WE ALSO DEFER TO HIS JUDGMENT ON WHETHER OFFICE ACCOMMODATIONS OFFERED BY JORDANIAN GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE SIGNIFICANTLY IMPAIRED THE EFFICIENCY OF THE HEADQUARTERS.

2. ADCOM MAY WISH TO CONSIDER WHETHER UNRWA SHOULD UNDER-TAKE FUTURE MOVE TO AMMAN IF ADEQUATE FACILITIES ARE MADE AVAILABLE. US REP SHOULD BE SYMPATHETIC TO ARAB POSITION THAT UNRWA HEADQUARTERS BE LOCATED IN MIDDLE EAST AREA IF FEASIBLE AT A FUTURE DATE. YOU SHOULD EMPHASIZE US VIEW THAT ANY MOVE BE WELL PLANNED AND BUDGETED IN ADVANCE TO AVOID ANY REDUCTION IN IMPORTANT SERVICES TO PALESTINIAN REFUGEES.

3. UNRWA BUDGET PROBLEMS ARE STILL SERIOUS AS ADCOM IS ONLY TOO WELL AWARE. EXPENSE OF MOVING FROM VIENNA TO AMMAN MUST BE WEIGHED AGAINST ANY DIFFERENTIAL IN RECURRING COSTS IN OPERATING IN AMMAN OR VIENNA. (REF E INDICATES THIS COULD BE SUBSTANTIAL.) THIS IS SUBJECT WHICH ADCOM MIGHT WELL RECOMMEND UN WORKING GROUP ON CONFIDENTIAL

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FINANCING CONSIDER DURING UPCOMING UNGA. WE BELIEVE IT WOULD COME TO CONCLUSION THAT UNRWA SHOULD PLAN FOR CONSOLIDATION OF ITS HEADQUARTERS IN ME REGION, PROBABLY IN AMMAN (IN 1980 IF THIS IS FEASIBLE) FOR BOTH FINANCIAL AND OPERATIONAL REASONS. WORKING GROUP HAS LEVERAGE OF RECOMMENDING CONTINUING FINANCING FOR UNRWA FOR EACH YEAR AND CAN SET TARGET DATE WHICH UNRWA WOULD HAVE TO MEET IN BUDGET PRESENTED FOR UNGA APPROVAL. IT IS PROBABLY TOO LATE TO WORK THIS INTO 1979 BUDGET.

4. WITH REGARD TO TWO DOCUMENTS REPORTED REF E WHICH COMMISSIONER GENERAL SENT TO ADCOM, WE NOTE THAT FIRST IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY. IF IT IS RAISED BY REPRESENTATIVES OF HOST GOVERNMENTS YOU SHOULD STATE THAT, SINCE UNRWA IS TEMPORARY AGENCY WITH LIMITED MANDATE, US WOULD OPPOSE ANY ATTEMPT TO INCORPORATE UNRWA'S BUDGET INTO REGULAR UN BUDGET AND/OR CONVERT ALL UNRWA EMPLOYEES INTO INTERNATIONAL STAFF. WITH RESPECT TO REQUEST FOR GUIDANCE ON INCOME PROJECTION AND EXPENDITURES, YOU SHOULD REITERATE US CONTINUING SUPPORT FOR UNRWA AND NEED FOR OTHER COUNTRIES TO GIVE MORE TO HELP OVERCOME DEFICIT. IF FUNDS ARE NOT ADEQUATE TO COVER ALL BUDGETED

EXPENDITURES, IT IS FUNCTION OF COMMISSIONER GENERAL AND HIS STAFF TO DETERMINE WHAT REDUCTIONS MUST BE MADE TO BRING EXPENDITURES IN LINE WITH INCOME.

5. FOLLOWING IS BRIEF STATEMENT REQUESTED IN REF A:

"MY GOVERNMENT HAS STRONGLY SUPPORTED THE PROGRAMS OF THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY SINCE ITS CREATION IN 1950. WE REGARD ITS WORK AS A VERY IMPORTANT PART OF THE UNITED NATIONS HUMANITARIAN AND DEVELOPMENTAL

ACTIVITIES. THE COMMISSIONER GENERAL'S REPORT INDICATES THAT UNRWA IS CONTINUING TO CARRY OUT THIS WORK WITH EFFICIENCY AND SKILL WHILE TRYING TO COPE WITH THE CON-
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TINUING SHORTFALL IN CONTRIBUTIONS TO MEET THE BASIC NEEDS OF THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEES. WE ARE ENCOURAGED THAT THE NEW PROCEDURE FOR DETERMINING CONTRIBUTIONS IN ADVANCE, WHILE NOT INCREASING THE TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS, HAS GIVEN UNRWA A BETTER VIEW OF THE INCOME IT CAN EXPECT AND ALLOWS IT TO PLAN ITS BUDGET ACCORDINGLY. WE ARE CONCERNED THAT ALTHOUGH UNRWA HAS SERIOUS FINANCIAL PROBLEMS, SOME COUNTRIES STILL DO NOT PROVIDE CONTRIBUTIONS COMMENSURATE WITH THEIR ABILITY AND INTEREST IN SATISFYING THE NEEDS OF THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEES. FACED WITH A CONTINUING DEFICIT, THE COMMISSIONER GENERAL WILL HAVE TO MAKE THE DIFFICULT BUDGETARY DECISIONS TO KEEP SPENDING IN LINE WITH INCOME. WE FULLY SUPPORT HIS JUDGMENT IN THESE MATTERS. THE RECENT NECESSITY OF AGAIN RELOCATING THE UNRWA HEADQUARTERS WITHIN LESS THAN ONE YEAR OF ITS RETURN TO BEIRUT IS AN ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL BURDEN TO THE AGENCY. THE US HAS GREAT CONFIDENCE IN THE COMMISSIONER GENERAL'S JUDGMENT."

6. GUIDANCE ON PLO ATTENDANCE AT ADCOM MEETINGS PROVIDED IN REF C IS STILL APPLICABLE. CHRISTOPHER

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